RURAL DISTRICT OF RIVERWOOD AND PORTLEMOUTHOE.

REPORT
OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
FOR THE YEAR 1939.

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
RIVERWOOD AND PORTLEMOUTHOE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my eighth Annual Report of the Riverwood and Portlemouthoe Rural District, which is for the year 1939.

In accordance with instructions received from the Minister of Health this Report is submitted to you as an Interim Report, and in curtailed form, in view of the need for strict economy in the use of paper and owing to the increased pressure of work in connection with war conditions placed upon my department.

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Detailed information regarding these are to be found in all my previous Reports, and in my Report for the year 1938 will be found a Table giving the acreage and population in that year of each of the sixteen parishes which comprise the District. Also, there will be found in my Report for 1938 an analysis of the composition of population and of housing, as found at the last Census taken in 1931; while in my report for 1937 is a table showing the seasonal distribution of male and female deaths and the mean age at death relevant to your District; and in my Report for 1936 a table is given showing the age incidence and male and female distribution of deaths attributable to Cancer in your District.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis) during the year 1939.

Diseases Notified.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Notified to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	31	19	0
Erysipelas	8	2	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	5	3	0
Pelloarcellitis	1	1	0
Pneumonia	10	1	1
Diphtheria	20	20	0
Enteric	1	0	0

TUBERCULOSIS. New Cases and Mortality during 1939.

	New Cases.	Deaths.
Respiratory	10	0
Non-respiratory	13	Nil.
	23	0

Notification is efficient. There is no evidence of excessive incidence of, or mortality from, Tuberculosis in any particular occupation in the area.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Mains of the West Hampshire Water Company supply practically the whole of your District with the exception of some part of the area in the extreme north-west. Analysis of the water is carried out monthly at the Bournemouth Corporation Laboratory and at the Counties Public Health Laboratories, and throughout the year these analyses have been consistently satisfactory.

During the year a main conduit of the West Hampshire Water Company has been extended from the town of Fordingbridge to Godshill.

During 1939 the systematic inspection of private well-water supplies inaugurated in 1937 was continued, and during the year 72 samples of well waters were submitted to analysis. Upon the outbreak of war the Minister of Health required sanitary co-operation with Military Authorities, particularly in respect to sanitary conditions relative to military billeting. To meet this, a considerable number of special inspections of well-water supplies of houses and premises allocated for billeting was carried out, with the result that a number of dwellings hitherto dependent upon wells found to be polluted were connected to the mains of the West Hampshire Water Company.

SANITATION.

Ringwood Sewerage.

The functioning of your Sewage Disposal Works at Moortown has continued to be satisfactory and efficient. The two Sewerage Pumping Stations and the Outfall Works have functioned very satisfactorily. The increase of population due to evacuees and others billeted in the town has been efficiently dealt with.

Fordingbridge.

The town and environs of Fordingbridge remain without main sewerage, an anomaly in the efficient sanitation of your District to which I have called frequent attention in my previous Reports, and one which I trust will meet with your most urgent consideration as soon as circumstances may permit.

Refuse Disposal.

This has been efficiently dealt with at the twelve dumps belonging to your Council.

HOUSING.

Attention was drawn in my last Report, that for the year 1938, to the special housing survey inaugurated in that year by Mr. F.A. Upstone, your Building Bye-laws Surveyor, and a summary was given of his results and of action taken in connection therewith. This work has been continued during the year 1939, with the satisfactory result that continued improvement has been brought about in the housing conditions of the rural working class population. I wish to thank Mr. Upstone for his untiring work in pressing forward improvement in the conditions of housing and raising of the general standard of domestic comfort for the rural workers of your District. I regard this as of outstanding importance among public health measures for securing and ensuring health and happiness in the future post-war period, when it is likely that a considerable trend of population to the rural areas will occur, thus mitigating the many evils and eliminating many of the economic difficulties which have accompanied the marked dysgenic tendency in recent times to over urbanisation. It is in my opinion essential and imperative that these potentialities continuously be borne in mind in all

considerations affecting future housing and planning in rural areas.

BED BUGS.

No complaints have been received during the year, and no disinfestation has been required.

POLLUTION OF RIVERS AND STREAMS.

No action has been needed for the prevention of fouling of rivers and streams.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

The inspection of Factories and Workshops in the District has been carried out on a reduced scale. All sanitary defects requiring attention have been brought to the notice of occupiers, and have been remedied without difficulty.

MILK SUPPLY.

Inspection of Dairies and Cowsheds has been carried out on a reduced scale. All defects found have been remedied.

MEAT AND OTHER FOOD.

There are no Slaughter-houses at present in use in the District. Some defective meat, bacon, fish, and butter has been found. Certificates stating that the articles were unfit for human food have been given to the retailers and they have been able to get free replacements from the wholesalers.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

During the year your Council agreed to the adoption of a Diphtheria Immunisation Scheme, and measures were taken by me to put the scheme into immediate effect. Immunisations of children are carried out by arrangement with private practitioners. The number of children up to 14 years of age immunised during the five months August to December was 196. Unfortunately insufficient returns were made of the ages of children immunised to enable them to be separated into age groups. Rectification of this defect has been made for statistical purposes in the future. The prophylactic used has been Alum Precipitated Toxoid.

SCHOOLS AND CHILD WELFARE.

The Medical Inspection of children in the Schools is carried out by the Staff of the County Medical Officer, as also the conduct of Child Welfare, Tuberculosis, Dental, and Ante-natal Clinics. Particulars of the days and times on which these Clinics are held in your District will be found in my Report for 1938. Special attention has been given to nutrition of infants and school children, and to tonsillar and orthopaedic defects.